

DRAFT MINUTES
GROTON HEIGHTS SCHOOL REUSE TASK FORCE
REGULAR MEETING
CITY MUNICIPAL BUILDING, CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

October 3, 2011

Page 1

The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Chair Catherine Kolnaski.

I. ROLL CALL

Members present were Janet Downs, Marian Galbraith, Mary Kelly, Catherine Kolnaski and Archie Swindell. A quorum of members was present.

Absent were Peter Ganacoplos, Bill Hart, Dana Parfitt, Bob Peruzzotti and Ralph Whitney.

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Project Management Specialist Holly Bridgham, RTM Representative Dana Semeraro and Richard Semeraro.

II. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS: None.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2011

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Ms. Galbraith, seconded by Ms. Downs.

Vote on approval of the minutes carried 4 in favor, 1 abstention (Ms. Kelly).

IV. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

1. Review/Summary of Survey Responses

Mr. Swindell reviewed the responses, noting that there seems to be a clear preference for public ownership, although many of the comments indicate a desire to see taxes paid on the property. He cautioned that the survey does not represent a random sample and that a judgment must still be made about use of the property. A Project LEARN magnet school would clearly be preferred, but transportation is an issue with magnet schools.

Mr. Oefinger recommended that Project LEARN be invited to address the task force soon, after which a preliminary report should be made to the Town Council.

Alternatives were discussed including use of the property by police and fire departments, other schools and community groups. Also discussed were use as a visitors' center and sale to a private party.

Mr. Swindell suggested that it might be useful to put the property on the market to get an idea of its value.

Ms. Galbraith reminded the group that it would be desirable to make any zoning changes first in order to encourage acceptable uses.

Ms. Kelly suggested that the task force make a list of possible uses and the requirements for each use; the list could then be presented to the Town Council.

Mr. Oefinger confirmed that tax credits may be available, since the school is a historic building. He added that the Town adopted institutional re-use regulations in connection with Mystic Academy and suggested that the City may want to adopt similar regulations.

Mr. Oefinger has been approached about the property by a number of churches and by a group looking for a location for doctors' offices. He also believes that private developers would be interested. He concluded that the task force should get a time line from LEARN and then decide how to proceed.

2. Other

There was consensus to put City zoning regulations on the agenda for the next meeting and to invite City Planner Barbara Goodrich to attend that meeting.

It was decided that the October 17 meeting will be canceled, since Chairman Kolnaski is unavailable on that date. Project LEARN will be invited to address the group either at a special meeting on October 24 or at the regularly scheduled meeting on November 7. Barbara Goodrich will also be invited and discussion will include City zoning regulations and possible adoption of institutional re-use regulations.

V. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Ms. Downs, seconded by Mr. Swindell and so voted unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Submitted by

Janet Downs, Task Force member